Missionary-Encouragement:

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED

On Wednesday Evening, the 16th of May, 1798,

BEFORE THE

PHILADELPHIA MISSIONARY SOCIETY

AND

THE CONGREGATION OF THE BAPTIST MEETING HOUSE,
PHILADELPHIA.

By the Rev. WILLIAM STAUGHTON,

PRINCIPAL OF BORDENTON ACADEMY.

O'er the gloomy hills of darkneſs,
Look my ſoul, be ſtill and gaze;
All the promiſes do travail
With a glorious day of grace.
Bleſſed Jub'lee,
Let thy glorious morning dawn.

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TO

The Philadelphia Missionary Society,

THE FOLLOWING

DISCOURSE,

WHICH APPEARS IN PUBLIC AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

The AUTHOR.

DISCOURSE.

ISAIAH LV. Ver. 12.

Ye ſhall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills ſhall break forth before you into ſinging, and all the trees of the field ſhall clap their hands.

WHEN ancient predictions of glory to the righteous are contemplated, the habit of beholding the impiety and infamy of the world, greatly diminiſhes the rapture they are deſigned to inſpire. We regard the excellent events they foretel, as objects of deſire, rather than objects of expectation; and, though the faithfulneſs of the divine teſtimonies ſuffer not our languiſhing faith to expire, when we contraſt *times* with *prophecies*, we are led to place the period of bleſſedneſs at a diſtance far remote.

But let us hope that more diligent attention will furniſh ideas more encouraging.

It is true, that though the knowledge of the Lord ſhall cover the earth, men are periſhing for *lack* of knowledge: having the underſtanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their hearts.

It is true, the depraved paſſions of the human ſoul are every where revealed. Iniquitous policy and mad ambition controul the actions of nations. The banners of war are unfurled;—fleets on the ocean, armies on the ſhores are meditating and at each other projecting deſtruction. In the private circles

of life, uncleanneſs and inebriation prevail. The God of heaven is blaſphemed, his ſervants are pitied or deſpiſed, his holy oracle is trampled under foot, and the great principles of piety, like tares in the harveſt field, are declared pernicious, and induſtriouſly rooted up.

It is true, miſery is every where diſcernible. Diſeaſes generated by crimes are conſuming the bodies of thouſands, and a convicted conſcience chaſtiſing their ſpirits. The depopulations of peſtilence are ſeen, are heard of, and widows and orphans, moving over fields of ſlaughter or to dwellings of poverty, are raiſing their piteous lamentations.

It is true,——but, why ſhould we amplify this afflicting detail? Though we continue to ſhroud mankind in darkneſs and guilt till deſtruction and death ſay "it is enough," we muſt even then remember, that the meaſures of Providence are not controllable by the offences and calamities of men; that the luſtre of prophetic truth cannot be concealed, and that in the fulfilment of prophecy, the groſſeſt darkneſs has frequently preceded the moſt marvellous light.

Under theſe impreſſions we are about illuſtrating this animating prediction, "Ye ſhall go out with joy "and be led forth with peace, the mountains and "hills ſhall break forth before you into ſinging, and "all the trees of the field ſhall clap *their* hands."

This paſſage appears to have been written about the cloſe of the reign of Hezekiah. Prophecies had been delivered foretelling the certain and impending diſſolution of the houſe of David and the captivity of the people. After Hezekiah's recovery from ſickneſs, the king of Babylon ſent to him letters and a preſent.—Letters perhaps to make the king of Judah his ally in his meditated revolt from the king of Aſſyria, and a preſent or offering expreſſive of his veneration for a perſon, the ſign of whoſe recovery was the going backward of that ſun, he

had been accuſtomed to adore as the ſovereign deity! Hezekiah, left of his God to the vanity of his heart, as though eager to prove himſelf a deſirable confederate and a proper ſubject of the honours he had received from the heavens, ſhews to the meſſengers of the ſon of Baladan "the houſe "of his precious things, the ſilver, the gold and "the ſpices, and the ointment, and all the houſe of "his armour, and all that was found in his treaſures: "there was nothing in his houſe nor in all his "dominion that Hezekiah ſhewed them not."

But immediately after this circumſtance Jehovah made manifeſt the folly of the prince, by foretelling the fate of the people. Then ſaid Iſaiah to Hezekiah, "Behold the days come, that all that *is* in "thine houſe, and *that* which thy fathers have laid "up in ſtore until this day, ſhall be carried to "Babylon: nothing ſhall be left, ſaith the Lord." To Manaſſeh the ſucceſſor of Hezekiah the Lord ſpake by his ſervants the prophets, ſaying, "I will "forſake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver "them into the hand of their enemies; and they "ſhall become a prey and a ſpoil to all their "enemies."

But in wrath he remembers mercy. Not more clearly is the captivity of Judah foretold than her glorious deliverance; not more, her ſin than her repentance, her tranſient diſgrace than her permanent honour. Yes, ye children of Judah, from *Jeruſalem*, ye ſhall go out with weeping and be led forth as priſoners of war; the mountains ſhall mourn, the hills ſhall tremble, and the trees of the foreſt ſhall howl in ſympathetic woe; but, yet, from *Babylon*, ye ſhall go out with joy and be led forth with peace, the mountains and the hills ſhall break forth before you into ſinging, and all the trees of the field ſhall clap their hands.

The prophet foretels a variety of events which were to attend Judah's reſtoration, well calculated to

awaken tranſport. See yonder the welcome ambaſſador! How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publiſheth peace;—that ſaith unto Zion, thy God reigneth! Hark! The voice of him that crieth in the wilderneſs, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make ſtraight in the deſert a high-way for our God.

Hear the language of Jehovah, he ſpeaks to *the deep*—"Be dry, and I will dry up the rivers to *Cyrus*. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places ſtraight: and I will break in pieces the gates of braſs and cut aſunder the bars of iron. For Jacob my ſervant's ſake, and Iſrael mine elect, I have called thee by thy name.

To *the heavens* and *earth*. "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the ſkies pour down righteouſneſs; let the earth open and let them bring forth ſalvation."

To *Zion in affliction*. "Awake, awake; put on thy ſtrength O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jeruſalem; ſhake thyſelf from the duſt, ariſe, looſe thyſelf from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter. No weapon that is formed againſt thee ſhall proſper; and every tongue that ſhall riſe againſt thee in judgment thou ſhalt condemn."

But is this word of Jehovah firm? It is firm as the ordinances of heaven, it is firmer than the mountains of the earth. "For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have ſworn that the waters of Noah ſhould no more go over the earth; ſo have I ſworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. The mountains ſhall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee."

Are the expectations of ſo great a deliverance reaſonable? They are reaſonable as the expectation of the riſing of vegetation under the influence of protecting ſnows and refreſhing rains. "For as the

rain cometh down and the ſnow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give ſeed to the ſower and bread to the eater: ſo ſhall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it ſhall not return unto me void, but it ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe, and it ſhall proſper *in the thing* whereto I ſent it."

It is generally confeſſed that the prophecies of the Bible allude to diſtinct and diſtant periods of time. That while a prophet announces the ruin of the enemies of Jeruſalem, the deliverance of Judah, and the bleſſings ſhe ſhould enjoy, he frequently carries forward our reflections to the deſtruction of every antichriſt, the eſtabliſhment of the kingdom of the Meſſiah, and the evangelical and immortal happineſs of his ſubjects *. Leſt the propriety of ſuch a mode of illuſtration ſhould be diſputed, a few ideas ſhall be ſuggeſted in its vindication.

The error of reſtricting predictions to their immediate ſubjects, may be proved from their ſuperiority to the capacity of ſuch ſubjects. For example, of Solomon his inſpired parent ſaid, "In his days ſhall the righteous flouriſh; and abundance of peace ſo long as the Moon endureth. He ſhall have dominion alſo from ſea to ſea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. All nations ſhall ſerve him. His name ſhall be continued as long as the ſun."

To aſſert that the dominion of Solomon extended from the lake of Sodom to the Mediterranean ſea,

* The ſubject of Iſaiah's prophecy includes in it three diſtinct parts. The deliverance of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon; the deliverance of the Gentiles from their miſerable ſtate of ignorance and idolatry; and the deliverance of mankind from the captivity of ſin and death. Theſe three ſubjects are ſubordinate to one another; and the two latter are ſhadowed out under the image of the former. They are covered by it as by a veil; which however is tranſparent and ſuffers them to appear through it. LOWTH's *Tranſlation of Iſaiah.*

from the river Euphrates to the borders of Egypt, is to assign but a mean fulfilment to so grand a prophesy. But what mean these expressions, "abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth—a name continued as long as the sun." Solomon, alas! has slept with his fathers and his very sepulchre is no more. At midnight the moon still walks in her brightness, but war, captivity, and penal retribution have demolished the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. In the morning, the sun still comes forth as a bridegroom, but the *name* of the son of Bathsheba is not known by a thousandth part of the human beings it enlightens. The prophecy must be fulfilled—In Solomon, with all his glory, it cannot. Behold then a greater than Solomon here. It is Jesus only, whose name shall endure forever, and whom all nations shall serve; whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation. What flattery declared of Cæsar, truth asserts of the Messiah. It is he "who shall "terminate his authority by the ocean, his fame by "the stars *."

The scriptural application of some prophesies to different events and periods, induces us to contemplate others in the same light. Of such an application take the following instance from Hosea xi. 1. "Out of Egypt have I called my Son." This text certainly refers to the days of Moses, when Israel by a succession of miracles was delivered from the tyranny of Pharaoh. It has an allusion to the days of Hosea, and seems designed as a preface to a prediction in in the 5th verse of the chapter. It alludes to the days of Christ. "The angel of the Lord appeareth "to Joseph in a dream saying; Arise, and take the "young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, "and be thou there until I bring thee word: for

* Imperium Oceano, famam qui terminet astris. VIRG.

" Herod will ſeek the young child to deſtroy him." Joſeph was there until the death of Herod: " that " it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken of the " Lord by the prophet, ſaying, out of Egypt have I " called my ſon." Nor ſhould I conceive the words at all miſapplied, were they produced as illuſtrative of the calling of ſinners from the power of Satan to God, or of the church from obſcurity to noon-day.

Predictions of this capacious nature are proper both as parts and proofs of a divine revelation. The fulneſs they diſcover, while it aſtoniſhes the faculties, invites the inveſtigation of mortals, and proves the pages the production of a mind capable of comprehending at a glance the paſt, the preſent, and the future.

Such predictions are accommodated to the diſpoſitions of men. Does an infidel queſtion the fulfilment of a prophecy? For his plenary conviction, or that he may be left without excuſe, its accompliſhment ſhall be repeated. Is the impreſſion of the importance of a prediction weak on the mind of a Chriſtian, becauſe fulfilled at a diſtant period, or at a diſtant place? He ſhall feel its grandeur, bluſh at his error, and give glory to his God, while he beholds it performed in the preſence of all the nations of the earth. If the prophetic morning ſtar be diſcredited, or the day be declared far diſtant, the majeſtic ſun ſhall diffuſe univerſal conviction and reproof.

In the government of the world, in the progreſs of redemption, Jehovah has been paſſing from ſtrength to ſtrength. As the ritual diſpenſation was an emblem of evangelical glory, ſo Jewiſh predictions embrace the ſalvation of Gentiles. The polity of the Jews muſt neceſſarily have been demoliſhed, becauſe of its carnality, becauſe of its reſtriction. But how admirable are the meaſures of heaven! Hebrew prophets have been inſpired

to foretel that the abundance of the ſeas ſhould be converted, and that the forces of the Gentiles ſhould come. They have been employed to prophecy down the prejudices of their nation, and prepare the way for that glorious miniſtration under which there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumciſion nor uncircumciſion, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Chriſt *is* all and in all.

Theſe obſervations juſtify the application of our text to the times of the goſpel, and ſuch an application may lead us to explain it as illuſtrative of the influence of Chriſtianity.

I. On Miſſionaries themſelves, and

II. On the people to whom their miſſion is directed.

The ſelected paſſage may repreſent the influence of the goſpel, in producing in the heart of a Miſſionary zeal, tranſport, and tranquillity. "They ſhall go out with joy and be led forth with peace."

Superſtition may ſend her votaries inactive to her cells; avarice may ſit in wretched concealment, idly pondering over periſhing bags; indolence and inſenſibility may fold the arms for ſlumber, but Chriſtianity is the parent of action. Liſten to its precepts—"Work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling. Gird up the loins of your mind, be ſober and hope to the end." Did competitors at Olympic feſtivals, fight, run, wreſtle, with all that agony the dread of infamy and the love of renown could inſpire? Rival their ardour, fight the good fight of faith, run the race ſet before you, wreſtle with principalities and powers. The world is your theatre of action.

Diminiſh its miſeries. Be eyes to the blind, be feet to the lame, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, viſit the impriſoned, that the bleſſing of him that is ready to periſh may come upon you.

Diminiſh its crimes, ye preachers in the ſanctuary! Ye meſſengers to the heathen! Prophecy aſſerts,

ye ſhall go out with joy, and he, to whom prophets gave witneſs, commands your zeal. Our text foretels your ſucceſſes, a preceding verſe contains your meſſage. Ho! every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters: and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. The great ſupper is prepared. Go out ye miniſters into the ſtreets and lanes of the city. Go out, ye Miſſionaries, into the high-ways and hedges and compel to come in that the houſe may be filled. Go ye into all the world, preach the goſpel to every creature. A man qualified for the ſphere of a miſſionary looks forth on the ſea of the world; notwithſtanding his fears, and diſappointments, at the word of his ſaviour, he caſts his net and becomes a fiſher of men. He is led forth by a conviction of the value of a ſoul, by the attractions of divine love, by the openings of divine providence and by the hand of his fellow Chriſtians. Are miſſionary ſocieties eſtabliſhed? he hearkens to their inſtructions, enjoys their patronage, and ſhares in their addreſſes to the heavenly throne. Clad with zeal as with a cloak, his faith ſubſtantiating the hoped for bleſſing, the fearing of the name of the Lord from the weſt, and his glory from the riſing of the ſun; he cries, I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord God, I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, *even* of thine only.

Chriſtianity produces in the hearts of its miniſters or miſſionaries the emotions of joy. They who bear the veſſels of the ſanctuary with joy, may draw water from the wells of ſalvation.

The faithful Miſſionary poſſeſſes the joy which ſprings from conſcious integrity. Rectitude and pleaſure are aſſociates. In the tranſgreſſions of an evil man there is a ſnare, but the righteous doth ſing and rejoice. We acknowledge the pureſt conduct may be aſcribed to the baſeſt motives. Though a Miſſionary, fired with love to God and to

man, ſubject himſelf to perils by ſea and perils by land. Though he paſs over toilſome hills and gloomy deſarts, his only ſuſtenance the berries of the foreſt and the waters of the brook. Though he be wet with the ſhowers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for want of a ſhelter. Though like Jacob when the ſun is ſet, he have only the ſtones of the place for his pillow, and his life be endangered from wild beaſts or wilder men: neither his piety, his fortitude, nor his ſufferings can ſecure him from the imputations of calumny. But let calumny prepare its bittereſt accuſations. Term him, ye children of the wicked one, a deceiver, a fanatic, or let him ſuffer reproaches from falſe or miſtaken brethren; he approves himſelf a miniſter of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in neceſſities, in diſtreſſes; by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteouſneſs. He is as ſorrowful, yet alway rejoicing. Perceiving that primitive miſſionaries who were in perils by the ſea and in perils by the heathen, in wearineſs and painfulneſs, in cold and nakedneſs, ſuffered the moſt cruel reproaches, as their follower, with them he cries, our rejoicing is this, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world. He is a good man and is ſatisfied from himſelf.

But not more does he rejoice in the purity of his motives, than in the excellency of his cauſe. It is truth and muſt prevail. Jeſuits have endured exceſſive fatigue, and have expoſed themſelves to dangers and deaths for the diſſemination of their erroneous ſentiments; but the miſſionaries we contemplate labour not, ſuffer not, that eccleſiaſtical thunders may terrify the heathen, that human creeds may be impoſed by civil force, that a croſs may be worn, that a hoſt may be worſhipped. They acknowledge no ſovereign over conſcience but him whom winds and ſea obey; no ſyſtem of faith, no

rules of conduct inconsistent with his holy oracles. They go out with joy while they reflect, that though superstitious zeal and literary artifice, the malice of individuals and the persecutions of empire have been employed for its destruction, the Gospel they deliver, stands like an awful column firm proof against the winds, the lightnings, the earthquakes of envious ages.—They address themselves to their work animated by a conviction, that the word of the Lord abideth for ever.

The gospel missionary goes out with the joy which springs from benevolence. Good will towards men, enters into the soul of the gospel. Through all the word of God a selfish temper is forbidden—We must do good and communicate. None of us liveth to himself, none of us dieth to himself. Missionaries are commonly sent among nations who have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, four-footed beasts, and creeping things. His spirit, like the apostle's, is stirred up within him, while he perceives cities and kingdoms wholly given to idolatry. There he views a fellow creature doing homage to a tree, and yonder another stands adoring a river. In one place, fifties are assembled to worship a rat, a hawk, a crocodile, or a beetle. In another, hundreds are venerating a cow, a frog, a serpent, or a stone. Does the good man go out in the evening, his eye affecteth his heart while he sees multitudes blessing the moon as the queen of heaven, and the stars as her attending armies. In the morning, not like Ezekiel, only in vision, he beholds men with their faces toward the east worshipping the sun. He finds himself among a people, who, as the natural consequence of their depraved conceptions of the deity, are full of unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, Rom. i. 29.

Nor does he in the affliction of his ſoul behold only the crimes of heathen nations, he hath ſeen and can bear witneſs that their ſorrows are multiplied that ſeek after another God. The ſword, the peſtilence, the noiſome beaſt, and the famine, frequently ſpread deſolation over an idolatrous land. Heathens, conſcious of guilt, apprehenſive of danger, and ignorant of the way in which ſin can be removed, ſeek mental eaſe in corporal torture. It is from hence, the horrible practices of torturing, burning, drowning, and ſacrificing human beings have taken their riſe.—Though enormities ſo groſs as theſe we have named do not obtain among American Indians, yet there are evils among them, ſome of which we ſhall name before we cloſe our diſcourſe, which loudly call for our pity and zeal.

But O how delightful the work to ſuppreſs theſe ſins and calamities! How ſuited to the feelings of the heart in which the love of God is ſhed abroad! Is 'joy a delight of the mind, from the conſideration 'of the preſent or aſſured approaching poſſeſſion of a 'good?' The miſſionary of Jeſus then goes out with joy. He rejoices in preſent good—Such is the poſſeſſion of the grace of God in his own heart, the being inveſted with the office of a teacher of the ignorant, and the ſhare he enjoys in the prayers of his fellow Chriſtians. But his heart is inſpired with a ſacred enthuſiaſm while he contemplates the good, of the approach of which he is ſo well aſſured. He goes out with promiſes of ſupport. I, the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, ſaying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee. I will make thee a new ſharp threſhing inſtrument having teeth: thou ſhalt threſh the mountains and beat them ſmall, and ſhalt make the hills as chaff, and thou ſhalt rejoice in the Lord and ſhalt glory in the God of Iſrael. I have put my words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the ſhadow of my hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and ſay unto

Zion, thou art my people—Lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.

He goes out with proſpects of ſucceſs. Whatever degree of bleſſing may attend particular miſſions, it is certain that the goſpel of the kingdom ſhall be preached in all the world for a witneſs unto all nations. The Meſſiah has aſked and has received the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for his poſſeſſion. The heroes of antiquity were filled with tranſport at the ambiguous anſwers of the oracle of Delphos. Favourable reſponſes from the gloomy cavern of Trophonius, would render the credulous Grecian fearleſs in the midſt of the moſt dreadful danger. An American Indian, relying on the friendly dreams of a ſooth-ſayer, goes forth to war with all the confidence of ſucceſs. But how infinitely greater is the encouragement of a man of God. He credits no dreamer of dreams. He believes in the Lord his God and is eſtabliſhed. I have not ſpoken, ſaith Jehovah, in ſecret, in a dark place of the earth: I the Lord ſpeak righteouſneſs: I give direct anſwers.—The promiſes in Chriſt are yea and amen. When Jeſus was about to be ſeparated from his diſciples, and was commiſſioning them to publiſh his goſpel, having given them promiſes of ſupport and proſpects of ſucceſs, he ſaid, theſe things have I ſpoken that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

Ye ſhall go out with joy and be led forth with peace. The diſciples of Jeſus poſſeſs peaceful diſpoſitions. Pride, obſtinacy, and ſeverity, are frequently charged on the profeſſors of Chriſtianity. If the charge be true, the guilt is wholly their own. Ignorance may be proud, bigotry may be obſtinate, and malice may be ſevere; but the goſpel is deſigned to make the ignorant wiſe, and the ill-natured gentle. It teaches us to put off as a ſhameful

covering, all anger, wrath, and malice, and to put on, as our faireſt dreſs, bowels of mercies, kindneſs, longſuffering.

Miſſionaries go forth with peaceful meſſages. With angels they proclaim, on earth peace. Theirs is the word which God ſent unto the children of Iſrael, preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt.

Mahomet, for the propagation of his religion, encouraged his followers to make proſelytes by force of arms. Theſe are his words in the Koran, "When "ye encounter unbelievers ſtrike off their heads." —"As for thoſe who fight in the ſervice of God's "true religion, God will not ſuffer their work to "periſh, he will lead them into paradiſe." How different the words of the Prince of Peace! Put thy ſword into the ſheath, ſaid he to Peter, and immediately touched and healed the man whoſe ear Peter had cut off. Jeſus anſwered to Pilate, If my kingdom were of this world, then would my ſervants fight, that I ſhould not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Of ſuch who deviate from the Arabian religion, the falſe prophet ſays, "kill them wherever ye find "them;" but when our Lord firſt ſhewed himſelf after his reſurrection to the diſciples who in the hour of darkneſs had all forſook him and fled, he ſaid, Peace be unto you; as my father hath ſent me ſo ſend I you.

But peaceful as are the diſpoſitions and meſſages of the propagators of the goſpel, they have often been charged with ſeditious deſigns. Guilt has turned the moral world upſide down. It reſembles an inverted pyramid, which only the longſuffering hand of God prevents from falling into awful ruin. When the apoſtles by manifeſtation of the truth, by revealing one mighty to ſave, were deſirous of placing the fearful pyramid on its baſis, the Jews of Theſſalonica cried, theſe that have turned the

world upſide down are come hither alſo, theſe all do contrary to the decrees of Cæſar.*

There is a ſenſe in which Chriſt himſelf came not to ſend peace, but a ſword; the diſciples are imitators of him. They go forth armed to deſtroy that peace of the world, by which men engage not to diſturb each others quiet in the way to hell. Peace without righteouſneſs is but a dead calm, before a deſolating tornado. Peace, peace, to him that is far off and to him that is near, ſaith the Lord, and I will heal him. But the wicked are like the troubled ſea, when it cannot reſt. Tremble ye Herods of the earth; vociferate ye Demetriuses; your thrones, your ſhrines are in danger. Not becauſe ſhrines and thrones are deſired by the ſervants of the moſt high God, but becauſe your thrones are founded in blood; your ſhrines are but poliſhed blaſphemy. Jehovah appears as the God of peace, when he bruiſes Satan beneath the Chriſtian's feet. Believers appear ſtill as the ſons of peace, when their preaching produces rage and tumult. Angry effects may follow; but the true end of the ſpread of the goſpel, is the eſtabliſhment of joy and tranquillity. This will be fully demonſtrated as we proceed to diſplay its influence.

II. On the people to whom a chriſtian miſſion is directed.

While Miſſionaries go out with joy and are led forth with peace, mountains and hills break forth before them into ſinging, and all the trees of the field clap their hands. In the Old Teſtament, alluſions to hills and mountains are very frequent. The land of Judah is called the country of the hills. Joſh. x. 40. Prophets derived their emblems from

* In Cluny, a city of Spain, there ſtands a column, erected by Diocleſian which has this inſcription, 'To Diocleſian, Jovius, and Maximinus, Cæſars, for having enlarged the empire and for having extirminated the name of Chriſtians THOSE DISTURBERS OF THE PUBLIC REPOSE.'

ſurrounding objects. Would they give dying mortals a ſtrong idea of the eternity of God? They cry before his footſtool, Thou haſt been our dwelling place in all generations, before the mountains were brought forth, from everlaſting to everlaſting thou art God. Is a ſenſe of the majeſty of Jehovah to be impreſſed on the hearts of the people? Hills are ſeen ſmoking at his touch. They reveal him weighing mountains in ſcales and hills in balances. Would they expreſs abundance of temporal good? Hills flow with milk and mountains drop down ſweet wine, for the cattle and the vines are there. Have they to repreſent a ſtate of tremendous deſpair? Wretches are heard crying, Rocks! fall on us, mountains! cover us. Would they exhibit the end of all things? Hills are departing, mountains are not found. Does a jealous God draw near to judgment? Who can ſtand before his indignation? His way is in the whirlwind and in the ſtorm, clouds are the duſt of his feet; the mountains quake at him and the hills melt; but when prophets diſplay the God of ſalvation, the deliverer of his people, mountains and hills break forth before them into ſinging.

There is a ſtrange power in the human mind of converting every thing, in imagination, to the likeneſs of itſelf. The mind ſeems as capable of acting on external objects, as external objects are of acting on the mind. Does an individual mourn? To him all nature appears to partake his ſorrows. Does he rejoice? Mountains and hills ſeem to feel his raptures, and trees of the field to clap their hands.

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, the people were like them that dream. Their mouths were filled with laughter, and their tongues with ſinging. But there was ſtill greater occaſion for triumph, than their releaſe from Babylon.

The Hebrews often aſked, and God often granted ſigns from heaven. When our Lord was working

the mightieſt miracles among the Jews, they were impatient for a ſign. They had conceived the Meſſiah was to reſcue them from Roman ſervitude. Falſe Chriſts had perſuaded the people to follow them, promiſing them miracles and *ſigns of liberty*. Unleſs the dead were raiſed, or the ocean calmed as pledges of approaching victory over Rome, they were conſidered as inadequate proofs that Jeſus was both Lord and Chriſt. To the Jews no ſign but the prophet Jonas was given. No other was needed. But when an event ſeemed remote from the promiſe or the threatening, ſigns the moſt ſtriking enſued. Eli! this ſhall be a ſign unto thee, that there ſhall not be an old man in thy houſe forever; Hophni and Phineas ſhall die both in one day. Hezekiah! this ſign ſhalt thou have that the Lord will heal thee, the ſun ſhall go backward ten degrees on the dial of thy father. Ahaz! the Lord himſelf will give thee a ſign, that the counſels of Rezin and Pekah ſhall not ſtand: Behold! a virgin ſhall conceive and bear a ſon and ſhall call his name Emmanuel. Shepherds! this ſhall be a ſign unto you, ye ſhall find the babe wrapt in ſwaddling clothes, lying in a manger. O Judah! thy deliverance from captivity is a token of future, greater bleſſings: it ſhall be for an everlaſting ſign, that ſhall not be cut off, v. 13. Let us not ſuppoſe ourſelves, brethren, unintereſted in the reſtoration of the Jews from Babylon. We have already juſtified the application of ancient predictions to the diſpenſation of the goſpel; while we perceive that their primary fulfilment is only a pledge of their re-accompliſhment in the latter days, let our faith be ſtrong and our joy be full.

Wherever the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God is circulated, there are glad tidings of great joy; and they, whoſe hearts receive it in its power, are excited to ſing aloud of the great ſalvation it brings. There are a variety of ſenſes in which chriſtianity may be viewed as tending to promote the happineſs

of any people. Let us contemplate its effects, firſt, on men in general; and ſecondly, on believers in particular.

We know that to an unbelieving world, the publiſhing of the goſpel is folly and madneſs. Far from rejoicing, modern infidels, like infidels of old, are *grieved* at the preaching of Jeſus and the reſurrection. The carnal mind is enmity againſt God; but yet carnal minds derive many temporal advantages from the very ſyſtem they abhor. The deſtruction of the tares is delayed, becauſe the wheat is yet in the field.

The diffuſion of Chriſtianity is a moſt joyful event in regard of the reſtraints it impoſes on vice. It leſſens the number of vicious examples. It ſets iniquity before men in the moſt hateful light. Conviction glares on the guilty mind, ſudden, awful, unexpected as the lightning, and the ſinner trembles in ſpite of himſelf.

Contemplate its influence on *idolatry*. Wherever the chriſtian ſtandard has been planted, idols have been broken and confounded. Where are the deities of Greece and Rome? Who now adores the divinity of Juno, or as a ſuppliant, places a ſacrifice on her altars? Æolus and Neptune ceaſe to be venerated, ſince he hath appeared who holds the winds in his fiſt, and the waters in the hollow of his hand. Pluto and Proſerpine are worſhipped no more; the aſtoniſhed idolater perceives, that he who was dead and is alive again, hath the keys of hell and death. Venus the adultereſs and Jove the whoremonger *, have fled before a religion which declares, that whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Their names are yet known, becauſe heathen authors are ſtill read in chriſtian ſchools;

* "Quis locus eſt templis auguſtior? hac quoque vitet,
In culpam ſi quæ eſt ingeniola ſuam.
Cum ſteterit Jovis æde: Jovis ſuccurret in æde,
Quam multas matres fecerit ille Deus." OVID.

but their worſhip is aboliſhed for ever; their temples exhibit only broken arches and proſtrate columns. The Dagons are fallen, becauſe the ark of truth has been brought near them. Once he who would commit inceſt, he who would indulge intoxication, might gratify his vicious deſires in adoration of a god or a goddeſs, but this pretence for the propriety of vice is urged no longer.

The holy ſcriptures provide a perpetual preventive againſt idolatry, in the appointment of one day in ſeven for religious inſtruction and worſhip*.

Contemplate the influence of Chriſtianity on *nations at war* with each other. Since it is the tendency of the goſpel to eſtabliſh peace; ſince, when the latter days come, in which the chriſtian religion ſhall be univerſal, the people ſhall learn war no more; it may reaſonably be expected, that the horrors of hoſtility, in proportion as it prevails, will be diminiſhed. Formerly, the laws of war were rigorous in the extreme; Chriſtianity has ameliorated them. Formerly, confident that vaſſalage or death muſt be the fate of the vanquiſhed, men fought with a ferocity approaching to madneſs; but, Chriſtianity has taught the ſhewing of mercy, has eſtabliſhed a habit of exchanging priſoners, and rendered war leſs deſtructive, by making captivity leſs dreadful. In the preſent day, through countries where the goſpel is not known, priſoners of war are victims devoted

* "If it be examined into, how it came to paſs that the Jews were ſo prone to idolatry before the Babyloniſh captivity, and ſo ſtrongly and cautiouſly even to ſuperſtition fixed againſt it after that captivity, the true reaſon hereof will appear to be, that they had the law and the prophets every week conſtantly read unto them after that captivity, which they had not before. And it is not to be doubted, but that if this method (of reading and explaining the ſcriptures on the Lord's day) were once dropped among us, the generality of the people, whatever elſe may be done to obviate it, would in ſeven years relapſe into as bad a ſtate of barbarity, as was ever in practice among the worſt of our Saxon or Daniſh anceſtors." PRIDEAUX.

to torture and death. The Indians, among whom you, my friends, are desirous of diffusing the light of life, afford a most painful proof of this truth *. May this reflection fire your zeal.

Contemplate the influence of christianity on *civil government*. There have been and are bad governments, where our holy religion has been professed; but were it absent, such governments would be far worse. The evils that have attended political administration in Europe, since the reign of Constantine, have arisen from the monstrous association of the church and state. Ambition for the sceptre gave rise to the mitre, and transformed the pretended descendants of humble fishermen into haughty pontiffs. Christianity, itself, an angel of light, has been pressed into services suited to a dæmon of darkness. But as this age of revolutions advances, the vile absurdity of being vicious for virtue's sake is exposed, and the political union of the kingdom of heaven with the government of the world is generally condemned; for what concord hath Christ with Belial?

Yet even in countries, where this unnatural connexion subsists, when the Bible has been free, for the perusal of the people in their native language, governments have witnessed the value of the christian

* When Indian victors with their captives arrive "at the village or camp, the women and children arm themselves with sticks and bludgeons, and form themselves into two ranks, through which the prisoners are obliged to pass. The treatment they undergo before they reach the extremity of the line is very severe. Sometimes they are so beaten over the head and face as to have scarcely any remains of life, and happy would it be for them, if by this usage an end was put to their wretched beings. But their tormentors take care that none of the blows they give prove mortal, as they wish to reserve the miserable sufferers for more severe inflictions. The prisoners destined to death are stripped, every part of their bodies blackened, the skin of a crow or raven is fixed on their heads; they are then bound to a stake, with faggots heaped around them, and obliged, for the last time to sing their death song." CARVER'S TRAVELS.

ſyſtem. A member* of a national church thus expreſſes himſelf. "The effects of Chriſtianity have been important. It has ſoftened the adminiſtration of deſpotic, or of nominally deſpotic governments. It has aboliſhed polygamy. It has reſtrained the licentiouſneſs of divorces. It has put an end to the expoſure of children, and the immolation of ſlaves. It has ſuppreſſed the combats of gladiators, and the impurities of religious rites. It has baniſhed if not unnatural vices, at leaſt the toleration of them. It has greatly meliorated the condition of the laborious poor, that is to ſay, of the great maſs of every community, by procuring for them a day of weekly reſt. In all countries in which it is profeſſed, it has produced numerous eſtabliſhments for the relief of ſickneſs and poverty, and in ſome a regular and general proviſion by law. It has triumphed over the ſlavery eſtabliſhed in the Roman empire: it is contending and I truſt will one day prevail againſt the worſe ſlavery of the Weſt-Indies."

The ſame divine ſyſtem commands and teaches magiſtrates to be miniſters of God for good. It enjoins on men a faithful regard to the juſt laws of their country. It expoſes and condemns the ſins which are a diſgrace to any people, and enforces the righteouſneſs which exalteth a nation. The correct ideas of liberty and equality, America poſſeſſes, have been drawn from this ſource. It eclipſes that ſplendour of the rich and the mighty, before which the vulgar ſhrink into veneration and ſervility. It regards all men as ſinners, and proclaims a common ſalvation. It directs men of every claſs to aſſemble for worſhip together, and foretels their general meeting around the throne of the Judge of all. It is now renovating the civil inſtitutions of the earth, and preſaging the period, when the kingdoms of this world ſhall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Chriſt.

* Archdeacon Paley.

Contemplate its influence on *agriculture*. It beats ſwords into plough-ſhares, and ſpears into pruning-hooks. It cheriſhes the ſocial temper: as naturally as ſtreams flow together into the ocean, real chriſtians ſeek the communion of ſaints. Inſtead of roving far diſtant, each one, with pious ardour ſays to his friend, where thou lodgeſt I will lodge, thy people ſhall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou dieſt will I die, and there will I be buried. With this fervour of ſpirit it combines diligence in buſineſs, and excites that contemplation of the works and character of God, with which the culture of the earth is ſo congenial.

To the abſence of theſe we muſt aſcribe the appearance of prodigious foreſts in the interior of this country, with ſcarce a ſpot devoted to tillage. Indians are ſo frequently ſending the red hatchet from nation to nation, their paſſion for hunting which ſeparates them from their villages and connexions is ſo powerful, and ſo great is their averſion to labour and contemplation, that huſbandry, the moſt eſſential ſupport of animal life, is little regarded. But, brethren, circulate the goſpel among them; then, inſtead of the thorn ſhall come up the fir tree, and inſtead of the brier ſhall come up the myrtle tree; then ſhall the wilderneſs and ſolitary place be glad, and the deſart ſhall bloſſom as the roſe.

Contemplate the influence of Chriſtianity on *literature*. We are ready to acknowledge that learning contraſted with piety is trifling, and that God hath choſen the weak things of the world to confound the wiſe; but we believe that while religion proſtrates the pride of pedantry, it promotes ſolid literary information.

What is literature? Is it knowledge in languages? Only the volume of inſpiration teaches us the origin of their confuſion. To be able to receive and convey ideas in ſeveral languages is ſo far from being

contrary to the religion of Jeſus, that one important evidence of its truth is the gift of tongues. Is it acquaintance with hiſtory? The Bible is the moſt ancient hiſtory, and is ſo full of alluſions to the cuſtoms of different nations, that an able expoſitor muſt be a hiſtorian. Is it the knowledge of the heavens? The man after God's own heart was a devout aſtronomer. Bind the ſweet influences of Pleiades, looſe the bands Orion, and then prove that the contemplation of the ſtars does not influence to humility and devotion. Does it conſiſt in reſearches into nature? The wiſeſt of men ſpake of trees; from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyſſop that ſpringeth out of the wall. He ſpake alſo of beaſts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fiſhes. Our divine Lord refers us to the lilies of the field, and to the birds of the air, for leſſons of wiſdom. Is it acquaintance with moral philoſophy? The New Teſtament contains a ſyſtem of morals, general as the connexions of man, and pure as the character of its author. Is it the knowledge of the belles-lettres? Where are the human compoſitions which equal the ſong of Moſes, the pſalms of David, the prophecies of Nahum, the prayer of Habakkuk, the revelation of John, the ſermons of Jeſus?

In that ſublime ſpecimen of ancient compoſition the xxviiith chapter of the book of Job, the patriarch repreſents the miner as ſetting an end to darkneſs, overturning mountains by their roots, and ſearching out all perfection; the ſtones of darkneſs and the ſhadow of death. The ſubterranean cavity he forms is termed a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not ſeen. The providence of Jehovah is an obſcure profound.

Deep in unfathomable mines,
Of never-failing ſkill,
He treaſures up his bright deſigns,
And works his ſovereign will.

There is in them a way which no mortal knows, which angelic penetration hath not ſeen. A proof of this we may derive from the manner in which the literature of the ancients and the New Teſtament itſelf were preſerved, when the barbarous nations laid waſte the whole empire of Rome, Conſtantinople excepted.

Chriſtianity is native wiſdom; ſuperſtition is imitative folly. Divine providence had prepared the cloiſter of the monaſtery, a way the vultures eye had not ſeen, for the ſecurity of monuments ſo valuable. But it was the ſuperſtition of monks which gave being to monaſtic inſtitutions; it was ſuperſtition in the barbarians which made them venerate the cell and the temple. More than ſeven ſucceſſive centuries were ancient writings ſacred and prophane thus aſtoniſhingly preſerved.

In the ſeventh century, Anglo Saxons were as illiterate as American Indians, but their converſion enlightened their minds and promoted the intereſts of literature. Before that event there was no ſuch thing as learning nor the means of obtaining it, in that part of Britain which they inhabited. Their ancient religion had a tendency to inſpire them with nothing but a brutal contempt of death and a ſavage delight in war. As long, therefore, as they continued in the belief and in the practice of that wretched ſuperſtition, they ſeem to have been incapable either of ſcience or civility, but by their converſion to Chriſtianity they became acceſſible to both.* You know the application I wiſh to make of this circumſtance to the people whoſe converſion is the object of your exertions and prayers.

Soon as the goſpel at the Reformation began to ſpread; ſoon as the chains of ſuperſtition were broken, ſcience came forth from her cave bound hand and foot with the grave clothes which the rude manners of ages had caſt around her. Then the

* Illuſtrations of Prophecy, Vol. II. p. 677.

voice of prevailing truth ſaid, Looſe her, and let her go! In the ſame proportion as the light of the goſpel increaſed, the province of learning was irradiated, and the ſame valuable effect will follow on its propagation to the end of time. Theſe are bleſſings which men in general enjoy from the diffuſion of the word of life, but there are bleſſings infinitely ſuperior which abound to believers in particular.

But O how great, how numerous are they! Born not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God. The joyful Chriſtian looks up to the ruler of heaven and cries, abba, father! Behold, ſays Jeſus, I make all things new; the believer feels his creating power. Old things paſs away; his hopes, his fears, his joys, his ſorrows, his companions, his proſpects, all things become new. He looks over the liſt of his offences, and his heart is filled with confuſion and deep repentance; he looks to his ſuffering Redeemer, and rejoices with joy unſpeakable, while he hears him ſay, ſon, thy ſins are forgiven thee. He is bleſt with acceſs by the new and living way to the heavenly throne. While a believer is lifting his cry and looking up, Jehovah is bowing the heavens and coming down. *He* draws nigh to God; *God* draws nigh to him. God contemplates and is delighted with his own perfections; the believer contemplates in his humble meaſure, and is delighted with the perfections of his God. A Chriſtian holds communion with the ſupreme majeſty. Laugh ye prophane! employ your railings againſt the good man's experience; he minds it not. If we ſay we have no fellowſhip with him we lie, for truly our fellowſhip is with the father and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt. "So the moon holds bright communion with the ſun the ſovereign planet; ſo ſhe receives and reflects his beams, ſhe ſhines glorioufly in a dark hemiſphere and moves onward, ſublime in her heavenly courſe,

regardleſs of all the barking animals which betray their ſenſeleſs malice."

The ſervant of Chriſt poſſeſſes the pleaſures of a good conſcience. Why did Cain exclaim, every one that findeth me ſhall ſlay me? Why ſmote the knees of Belſhazzar together? why were the joints of his loins looſed? Becauſe a hand wrote he knew not what upon a wall. Why did Herod on hearing the fame of Jeſus cry, John Baptiſt is riſen from the dead. Why? becauſe the horrors of a guilty conſcience terrified and confounded them. But believers, exerciſing themſelves in the work of faith and labour of love, have a conſcience void of offence toward God and toward men.

> The day glides ſweetly o'er their heads,
> Made up of innocence and love;
> And ſoft, and ſilent as the ſhades,
> Their nightly minutes gently move.

Undiſturbed by the accuſations of guilt in his own conſcience, he anticipates with calm delight the ſolemnities of the final judgment. Juſtified by faith in Chriſt freely from all things, his fears vaniſh; For who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? God that juſtifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Chriſt that died? He is riſen again and is at the right hand of God making interceſſion!

When afflictions come upon a Chriſtian, he can perceive they are intended for his good, and that they are impoſed by the hand of his beſt friend. He regards himſelf as a fellow ſufferer with the long train of Patriarchs, Prophets, Apoſtles, and Martyrs. He knows his afflictions work out his glory, his light afflictions, a weight of glory, afflictions which are but for a moment end in a weight of glory, far more exceeding and eternal.

He overcomes the falſe maxims, the hard ſpeeches, and fierce reſentments of an evil world, and has a right to the tree of life. The hopeleſs phyſician, the throbbing pulſe, the filmed eye, the

meaſured grave, the deſcending coffin, to a believing mind are not horrible, they are divinely pleaſing. Sin, the ſting of death, the worm of hell, is deſtroyed. Let worms riot on this body, this corruptible ſhall put on incorruption. This earthly houſe may now be demoliſhed, and it may lie for ages uninhabited and deſolate, but it ſhall become a temple inconceivably glorious. When the trumpet ſounds, on the reſurrection morning, believers ſhall ſpring from their tombs, ſhake themſelves from their duſt, trample on the broken powers of the grave, put on their beautiful garments, and riſe in a cloud to meet their coming Lord. They ſhall paſs the gate into the Holy City, receive the crown of life and the palm of victory, and join with the harpers on the ſea of glaſs in an everlaſting anthem of praiſe.

Theſe are glories which are reſerved for believers *above;* but there are glories, which are foretold and ſhall be enjoyed here *below.* He is looking for what is termed the latter-day of glory, when the knowledge of the Lord ſhall cover the earth as the waters cover the place of the ſea; when, before the miniſtry of the goſpel, mountains and hills ſhall break forth into ſinging, and all the trees of the foreſt ſhall clap their hands.

But may we hope this bleſſed period is nigh at hand? We may. Are our reaſons aſked for our indulging ſo pleaſing an expectation? They are ſuch as the following.

Firſt, the rapid fulfilment of ancient prophecies. There is a general correſpondence between the writings of one prophet, and thoſe of another; but the book of Daniel, and the Revelations of John are peculiarly harmonious. Daniel exhibits ſtrong outlines; John a more finiſhed likeneſs; but the object is the ſame. Their predictions are ſingularly explicit on the future ſtate of the chriſtian church. —Perilous times and times of refreſhing are foretold. Though of the day and the hour of their arrival

no man knoweth, ſo as to be able to ſpeak with juſtifiable confidence, yet there are ſuch alluſions* to the period in both John and Daniel, as muſt powerfully ſtrike, while they ſeriouſly employ the pious mind. The time when the powers of the earth ſhall be ſhaken, may be known in ſome meaſure by the great and viſible ſuppreſſion of *Papal Power*. Rome at the Reformation received a blow, ſhe has never recovered; but, lately her plagues have come upon her with dreadful violence. The event which has engaged the prayers of ſaints on earth, and of martyrs at the foot of the altar, is now accompliſhing. Arrayed in purple and ſcarlet, Rome, the mother of harlots, ſhall be drunken with the blood of the ſaints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jeſus, no more. The angel has daſhed the millſtone into the waters. The beaſt is exiled; Babylon is falling; the horns are broken; the merchants are weeping; all heaven is rejoicing. Why ſhould the chriſtian world be ſilent as midnight, when the rays of the morning are beaming upon them? Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apoſtles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. Rejoice over her, ye inhabitants of the

* Both John and Daniel ſpeak of a time, times, and the half or dividing of a time, which period anſwers to the forty-two months, in which the Holy City ſhall be trodden under foot, and in which the ten horned beaſt ſhould enjoy his power; and to the thouſand two hundred and three ſcore days in which the two witneſſes ſhall prophecy in ſackcloth, and in which God ſhall feed the woman in the wilderneſs; each intending in prophetic ſtyle the ſpace of one thouſand two hundred and ſixty years. Did we know when to fix the beginning of this period, calculation would be eaſy and deciſive; but this is involved in darkneſs.... It deſerves remark, that in the year 529 the Juſtinian code, the baſis of eccleſiaſtical uſurpation, was publiſhed, about the ſame time, the power of the Pope was declared ſupreme, and then the order of Benedictine monks was founded. 1260 years added to this date brings us down to the year 1789, when the Aſſembly in France aſſerted civil and religious liberty. Mighty commotions have followed and continue ſtill to aſtoniſh the nations.

earth, join with the people in heaven in saying, Alleluia, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God.

Old Babylon, after the conquests of Cyrus, continued gradually to decay. In the same proportion as the Israelites were loosened from their captivity and re-instated in the goodly land, the pride of nations became a desolation. So we may expect that as the church of Rome the mystical Babylon declines, the church of Christ the true Israel will rise. The ebbing of the tide produces a flood on opposite shores.

The eastern as well as the western Antichrist is evidently declining; the great river Euphrates is drying up, and a way being made for the kings of the east; the sovereigns probably of Persia and Tartary. Enfeebled by Russia on the north, and above all by its internal corruptions, the Turkish empire is tumbling into ruin. The signs of the times inspire a vigorous hope, that the follies of the Koran will soon be forgotten, and the mosque and the brothel be known no more.

Our expectations are strengthened, secondly, by observing what we suppose to be the *harbingers* of the day, when mountains and hills shall break forth into song.

Perhaps the predicted events that attended the destruction of Jerusalem, are emblems of the general destruction of vice: it is certain much of our Saviour's language in the xxivth of Matthew, carries our views beyond the then, coming catastrophe. Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. If similar events to those which preceded the ruin of the Jewish polity shall precede the overthrow of the anti-christian governments of the earth, their end is assuredly not distant. The trees now shoot forth, and we see and know, that summer is now nigh at hand.

Wars and commotions introduced the final victory of Titus over Jeruſalem*; but at what time has war prevailed more deſtructively than at the preſent? Nation is riſing againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom. There is NOW upon the earth the diſtreſs of nations, with perplexity; the ſea and the waves roaring. Men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things which are coming on the earth. The ocean is burdened with fleets and the ſhores all noiſy with warlike preparations. The object of modern wars is not the acquiſition of loſt territory, the reparation of injuries, or the puniſhment of inſult; it is the entire deſtruction of the oppoſing power. When theſe things begin to come to paſs, then, ſaith our Lord, look up and lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh.

Did peſtilences precede Jeruſalem's viſitation? How much are they now prevailing! We need not croſs the Atlantic for proofs. The waſting that deſtroys at noon-day, has in this city ſlain its hundreds. There is ſcarcely a principal town in the United States, in which men have not fallen victims to peſtilential fever.

Were many deceived in Judea by falſe prophets? Men of this deſcription are to be found both in America and Europe, and their numbers are increaſing.

Did the ſlaughter of the Jews follow the prevalence of groſs infidelity among them? When did infidelity ever raiſe the head of oppoſition againſt the truth, ſo vigorouſly as in the preſent day? It was common with the Jews juſt before their overthrow, to make a jeſt of divine things, and to deride as ſo many ſenſeleſs tales and juggling impoſtures, the ſacred oracles of their prophets! Such is the teſtimony of Joſephus. Who cannot bear teſtimony that at the preſent time, divine ſubjects are held up

* Vide Joſephus, Newton on the Prophecies, Edward's Miſcellaneous Obſervations, &c. &c.

to public deriſion; that Chriſtianity is termed a juggle; that its defenders are pronounced impoſtors; its prophecies abſurd, and that in the view of thouſands it merits the contempt of every philoſophic mind? It deſerves to be well conſidered, that ſince the goſpel ſyſtem has been introduced, there never was a time when infidels were ſo numerous. Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory informs us of the various oppoſition it has ſuffered. At one time it was oppoſed by attempts to reconcile it with heathen philoſophy, at another by clothing it with the trappings of ſuperſtition. With a fickleneſs reſembling king Nebuchadnezzar's, men have at one ſeaſon declared its enemies ought to be put to death, and at another have martyred millions of its friends: but infidelity like the preſent is no where recorded.

Until within theſe few years, infidels were few as ſerpents in a cultivated country. Their characters were concealed under the name of chriſtians, and their ſentiments when publiſhed, occaſionally and cautiouſly introduced in the midſt of a relation of hiſtorical facts *. But now reſtraints are ſhaken off, and men glory in their unbelief. The hoary ſinner and the deluded youth unite to aſſert that the religion of Jeſus is folly; while hand in hand they practice the vices it condemns.

But what means this mighty revolution in the world of ſeeming chriſtians? Are ye at a loſs, my hearers, to form a judgment on what you daily ſee and hear? Let Jude inſtruct you: "Beloved, remember ye the words which were ſpoken by the apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; how that there ſhould be mockers in the LAST TIME, who ſhould walk after their own ungodly luſts." Jeſus hath told us that God will avenge his own elect, he will avenge them ſpeedily. "*Nevertheleſs*, when the Son

* This was notoriouſly the caſe with Bolingbroke, Gibbons, and Hume.

of Man cometh ſhall he find FAITH on the earth?" Shall he not rather find infidel infatuation? Peter tell us, that "there ſhall come in the LAST DAYS, ſcoffers walking after their own luſts and ſaying, where is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Indeed, while we indulge all that diffidence, which the nature of prophecy and our ſubjection to miſtake require, there is ſuch general, ſuch great, ſuch novel and ſuch various oppoſition now made againſt the Lord and his Chriſt, that we feel little difficulty in ſaying, Little children, it is the LAST TIME: and, as ye have heard that Anti-chriſt ſhall come, even now there are many Anti-chriſt's, whereby we know it is the LAST TIME.

In conjunction with theſe remarks, we may obſerve that the important improvements which of late years have been made in ſcience, ſeem to be opening the way for the introduction of the latter days.

The art of printing has contributed greatly to the illumination of the minds of men*. Books, the grand medium of information, are now widely circulated and eaſily obtained. The labour of tranſcribing is no longer requiſite. In each quarter of the world the Preſs is in motion, and will, we truſt, under the divine hand, prove an auxiliary mean of cauſing the earth ſoon to be full of the knowledge of the Lord. Improvements in natural philoſophy have of late been great and rapid. Numerous machines are invented which leſſen manual labour. The tilling of the ground is better underſtood, eaſier effected, and far more advantageous. The properties of vegetables are better known, and more generally appropriated. The ſcience of medicine has undergone an amazing

* Conſcious how much printing tends to diſſeminate knowledge, the Turks rigorouſly forbid it in their empire, leſt it ſhould produce a change in their religion and government.

revolution. The diſcaſes of the animal ſyſtem are claſſed with greater perſpicuity and removed with increaſing facility. Improvements in navigation have been equally great. The confident ſeaman now croſſes an ocean of a thouſand leagues with more ſafety, than men anciently paſſed a river of a thouſand yards. Guided by his faithful compaſs, he ventures on the pathleſs deep, bids adieu to joyful ſhores, and through awful billows in company with the dolphin, the ſhark, the whale, and the ſea-ſnake, ſearches for lands on the other ſide of the globe. By ingenious traverſings, the oppoſition of the winds is overcome and the ſame blaſt is made to drive along veſſels in every direction. It is from hence that lands ſeparated from each other by wide and turbulent waters are united in manners, in intereſt, and in proſperity. It is by means of navigation we look for the eſtabliſhment of the goſpel in the iſlands of the earth. Surely, Great Redeemer! the iſles wait for thee, and the ſhips of Tarſhiſh firſt, to bring thy ſons from far. Miſſionaries upon the ocean ſhall go out with joy, waves like mountains ſhall break forth before them into ſinging, and as they approach the remoteſt ſhores, the trees of the foreſts ſhall clap their hands.

The natural rights of men have been more clearly aſcertained and more confidently aſſerted than in ages paſt, and a revolutionary ſpirit is now gaining ground through the whole province of civil and eccleſiaſtical inſtitution. Wickedneſs is employed by Providence in ruining wickedneſs. Among the powers of the earth as in the army of the Midianites, the Lord ſeems to be ſetting every man's hand againſt his fellow. Infidelity demoliſhes ſuperſtition, and impatience of every reſtraint is the ruin of tyranny.

For ſeveral years paſt, how has the mind of man been agitated! Events which anciently occupied an age, are now accompliſhed in a day. Political

calculation is altogether defeated, and men ſtand wondering what will be the iſſue of the extraordinary proceſs. As an accelerated velocity in matter implies an approximation to the point of attraction, ſo the increaſing rapidity in the motions of the governments of the earth, intimates their nearneſs to that ſtate of reſt, when the Prince of Peace ſhall ſway an univerſal ſceptre. The four grand monarchies are deſtroyed, in the latter of which the God of heaven ſet up a kingdom which ſhall never be deſtroyed. The ſtone, which brake in pieces the image, compoſed of the gold of Aſſyria, the ſilver of Perſia, the braſs of Greece, and the iron of Rome, has ſwelled into a mountain and is filling the earth. Its progreſs many of the offended ſons of men are ſtriving to retard; but the effort is as fooliſh and uſeleſs as the conduct of the Thracians in diſcharging arrows at the heavens, becauſe angry at unſeaſonable ſhowers. Stop the revolution of the earth, arreſt time in its flight, and then try to hinder the advance of the Redeemer's kingdom. Huſh the roaring of ſummer thunders, and then ſilence the deepening groans of creation, waiting for the adoption.

It is a pleaſing preſage that a MISSIONARY SPIRIT has gone forth in the world. Among the rivers in Aſia, in the wilds of Africa, and on the mountains of America, publiſhers of ſalvation are to be found. The firmament of the church is widening and new ſtars are diſplaying the new creation's glory. Hindoos are ceaſing to worſhip their Ganges, and idols are famiſhed. The Ethiopian is chilled with the view of his crimes, and the Greenlander warmed with redeeming love. From the uttermoſt part of the earth have we heard ſongs, even, glory to the righteous.

MY BRETHREN,

In the interior of the country we inhabit, there are thouſands of Indians who are covered with groſs darkneſs. We have brought our families and our

manners to their ſhores, let us ſhew them, that we have brought with us a volume which may prove a light unto their feet and a lamp to their paths. Let us point them to the mark of the prize of the high calling of chriſtians, a mark by which they may "ſteer" with confidence through "the wilderneſs" of this perplexing world.

Let neither their *imagined* virtues* nor their *real* vices prevent your exertions.

Are Indians *unclean?* Send the goſpel among them. This will teach every one how to poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctification and honour. It will ſhew to them that marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but that whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Are they *filthy* in their manners and perſons? Send them the goſpel. They will learn from it to cleanſe themſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit. Having their hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, their bodies will be waſhed as with pure water. The body will be reſpected when regarded as a temple for the Holy Ghoſt. Health and cleanlineſs follow the pious obſervance of the Lord's day.

Are Indians *drunkards?* Send the goſpel among them. Let Miſſionaries cry at the door of their tents, Take heed to yourſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs! Wo unto them that riſe up early in the morning that they may follow ſtrong drink, that

* "It has become faſhionable of late years for the philoſophers of Europe to celebrate the virtues of the ſavages of America.—Whether the deſign of their encomiums was to expoſe Chriſtianity and depreciate the advantages of civilization, I know not, but they have evidently had thoſe effects upon the minds of weak people." Dr. Rush's Essays.

From the travels of Charlevoix, Hennepen, Carver, &c. the doctor demonſtrates that *uncleanneſs*, *naſtineſs*, *drunkenneſs*, *gluttony*, *treachery*, *cruelty*, *idleneſs*, *theft*, *gaming*, and *the degrading of their women* are common vices. He concludes a ſhort, but very inſtructive eſſay on the ſubject with ſaying; "How great is the efficacy of Chriſtianity, which by purifying the heart, renders the practice of the contrary virtues natural and agreeable!"

continue unto night, until wine (or rum) enflame them. When they know that drunkenneſs at laſt biteth like a ſerpent and ſtingeth like an adder, and that drunkards ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God, we may expect that by this vice, whole tribes will be no more deſtroyed, and that Indians will ceaſe to glory in their ſhame.

Are they *gluttonous?* Send them the goſpel, and their belly will ſoon ceaſe to be their God. The body will be kept under, and be brought into ſubjection. Aſſiſted to put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, proviſion will not be made for the fleſh to fulfil its luſts. They will uſe the world as not abuſing it.

Are Indians *treacherous?* Send the goſpel among them, that they may have their converſation in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity. It is only by this means that with reſpect to public treaties, or private dealings, you will be prevented from ſaying their tongue is *an arrow ſhot out*, it ſpeaketh deceit: one ſpeaketh peaceably with his mouth, but in heart he layeth wait. Embracing the religion of the king of truth, they will become true men.

Are they *cruel?* Send them the goſpel! Inſtead of regarding compaſſion as effeminacy, they will conſider it as a mark of human greatneſs. Inſtruments of cruelty ſhall be ſought for in vain, in their habitations. Under the influence of Chriſtianity the ſcalping knife and the hatchet will become uſeleſs, and the war-hoop and death-ſong be forgotten. The lion and the wolf ſhall become gentle as the kid or the lamb. That heart cannot be cruel in which the love of God is ſhed abroad.

Are Indians *idle?** Send the goſpel among them. We commanded you, ſay the apoſtles, that if any

* "Their work advances under their hand with ſuch ſlowneſs, that an eye witneſs compares it to the imperceptible progreſs of vegetation. They ſpend ſo many years in forming a canoe, that it often begins to rot with age, before they finiſh it." Robertson's America.

would not work, neither ſhould he eat. We beſeech you that ye ſtudy to be quiet, and to do your own buſineſs, and to work with your own hands, that ye may walk honeſtly.

Are they *diſhoneſt?* Send them the goſpel. Let them know, that this is the will of God that no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter, becauſe that the Lord is the avenger of all ſuch. Let him that ſtole, ſteal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good. Let none ſuffer as a thief.

Are Indians fond of *gaming?* Send the goſpel among them! By teaching its converts to come out from ungodly company, to care for them of their own houſhold, and to ſhun deceit and lying, it deſtroys the injurious practice. Such who beguile unſtable ſouls, having hearts exerciſed with covetous practices are curſed children. Spots they are and blemiſhes, ſporting themſelves with their own deceivings, who ſhall receive the reward of unrighteouſneſs.

Are they in the habit of degrading their women? Send them the goſpel, which ſays, Let the huſband render to the wife due benevolence, giving honour to her as the weaker veſſel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life. Let every one of you love his wife even as himſelf.

The goſpel is ſuited to the removal of the vices which diſgrace the Indian tribes; and where it is received in power, inſtead of the brier, will come up the fir-tree, and inſtead of the thorn, the myrtle tree. Inſtead of uncleanneſs, there will be purity; inſtead of drunkenneſs, ſobriety; inſtead of treachery, integrity; inſtead of cruelty, mercy; inſtead of indolence, induſtry; inſtead of theft, honeſty; and inſtead of contempt for females, the mother, the wife, the daughter, and the ſiſter will be loved and reſpected as tender, faithful friends.

This conviction, united with an ardent desire to glorify God in the exercise of Christian benevolence towards the heathen, gave birth to the PHILADELPHIA MISSIONARY SOCIETY*. This Society, while it is anxious that the heathen may hear the faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; is desirous of introducing among the Indians some of those arts which lead the way to civilization, ignorance of which is an indirect auxiliary to the commission of various crimes. The introduction of the loom, the forge, and the plough, of tame animals, and of useful metals is contemplated; that by the increase of civil information, the wall of partition

* The Philadelphia Missionary Society, was formed in the month of January 1798. Three sermons were preached on the occasion, by Rev. MORGAN J. RHEES. The first from Rom. i. 15, 16. —The second from Rom. x. 12—15.—The third from Luke xvi. 31.—The object of the first discourse was to pourtray the character of a primitive Missionary, his commission, and the effect of its delivery on nations and on believing individuals. Additional motives were urged to encourage a mission among the American heathen. The second discourse had for its object to prove, that God is no respecter of persons, that the riches of his grace are communicated to men by means of preaching, and that the preachers are sent and supported by men as well as by God. It was concluded by enforcing it as a duty, incumbent on every Christian to contribute towards teaching all nations the principles of pure and undefiled religion. The third discourse was applied particularly to infidels and libertines, its principal object was to shew the sufficiency of Revelation. That it contains ample evidence of its truth to convince any reasonable creature who will take the pains to examine it and that therefore we are not to expect Jehovah will raise any person from the dead, to convert nominal Christians or to convince the heathen; that therefore it is our duty to send messengers of peace among them, that they may have Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles to bear testimony to the truth. If they reject, we shall be clear from their blood.

Since the above period the number of members and the prospects of doing good have gradually increased, and it is hoped that ere long Missionaries, under their cheerful guidance, and under the guidance of the God of love, will go out with joy, and be led forth with peace.

between Indians and the United States may be broken down, and the tomahawk and the bayonet become uſeleſs.

Every inſtitution of this nature merits patronage; and it becomes each individual to exerciſe his influence for the advancement of ſo pious a deſign. Shall I attempt to produce farther arguments to excite you to fulfil the good pleaſure of God? Shall I remind you of the prodigious numbers of our fellow men who are yet involved in ignorance and miſery? Shall I preſs on you the value of the gospel, that it conſiſts of *glad tidings to periſhing ſinners?* Shall I remind you of the example of Jeſus who went about doing good, and whoſe zeal for the houſe of God conſumed him? Shall I refer you to the holy apoſtles, who counted not their lives dear, ſo they might fulfil their miniſterial courſe? Shall I preſs on you, that zeal for the Lord of hoſts has lately given riſe to many miſſionary ſocieties, and refer you to Scotland, to Germany, to England and to New-York? Need I tell you that careleſſneſs is guilt, and indolence ignoble? Shall I point you to nature, full of labour all around you, and invite reſtleſs winds, rolling tides, riſing vegetables, and revolving orbs to put your inactivity to the bluſh? Shall I exhibit the encouragements to ſending miſſionaries among the Indians, derivable from an Indian's believing in the *Great Spirit* and in a *future ſtate;* from the peace now ſubſiſting between them and us, and from their proximity to us? Shall I aſſert the honor of being fellow-workers with God, the pleaſure that ſprings from fulfilling our duty and doing good, and the probability of ſucceſs deducible from the ſigns of the times? I perſuade myſelf the taſk is unneceſſary. I perſuade myſelf that you are ready to cry out, How ſhall we begin to teſtify our zeal? what immediate meaſure ſhall we adopt for aiding ſo benevolent a deſign? I congratulate myſelf on being able to aſſiſt your pleaſures, in hopes of

ſeeing this evening a fulfilment of that animating prophecy. They ſhall bring their ſilver and their gold with them unto the name of the Lord thy God. At the cloſe of this ſervice your liberality will have a fair opportunity for its exertion. The ſociety, for which I have this evening the honour to plead, is weak; it has implored the fatherly care of Heaven, and now would welcome aſſiſtance from you. As yet 'tis a little one, but we truſt the little one will become a thouſand. In the exerciſe of that generous zeal which will give pleaſure in death, and expecting the Maſter's bleſſing, we hope to ſee mountains and hills, the Andes and the Alleghany break forth into ſinging, and the trees of *the wilderneſs* clap their hands in goſpel harmony. The Lord will haſten it in his time.

THE END.